

By hosting events in honor of *National Poison Prevention Week 2009*, you will help to educate your community on poisoning prevention. The *National Poison Prevention Week Council* has two themes, “Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons,” and “Poisoning Spans a Lifetime.” When planning your own events, consider how you can adapt these themes to your audience’s ages and interests.

We encourage you to contact your local Poison Center to find out what activities they are conducting, and how you can partner with them. Your local Poison Center can also give you ideas and provide you with resources to support your own event. The following recommendations will help you to coordinate your event successfully.

### Set Your Event Date Around Other National Poison Prevention Week Activities

Contact your local Poison Center to learn about other *National Poison Prevention Week* activities and how you can support these activities. Cross-check your events with others, locally and nationally. Here are some examples of organizations you can collaborate with:

- Local radio and TV stations
- Community organizations, including religious entities, civic groups, fraternities and sororities, and recreation leagues and organizations
- Medical, emergency support, and public health groups
- Education-related organizations, including day care centers, libraries, colleges and universities, and parent-teacher associations

- Businesses, including baby product stores, toy stores, grocery stores, maternity stores, and drug stores/pharmacies

### Streamline Your Event

- When planning an event, keep in mind your audience. Organize activities so that they run efficiently. Avoid activities that do not support the messages of *National Poison Prevention Week*.
- Choose a location that easily accommodates members of the media and people with special needs. Some possible venues for your event include: your local Poison Center, police station, firehouse, hospital, health clinic, YMCA, library, YWCA, town hall, community center, church, synagogue, elementary school, college, or university.
- Provide speakers, moderators, and other participants with an agenda for the event. Ask that they arrive at least a half-hour early. If possible, designate a private space where they can prepare.
- Be prepared for last minute changes. Secure a back-up venue, especially if your event is outdoors. Make sure to include alternative locations in your correspondence with attendees, speakers, moderators, and the media. Also secure a back-up speaker, in case your keynote speaker cancels unexpectedly.
- Remind speakers to prepare speeches that will not exceed the allotted time frame. If possible, obtain copies of their speeches beforehand to avoid repetition and to ensure that multiple perspectives on poison prevention are highlighted. It is also a good idea to allow a brief window for overlap or logistical changes.



### Choosing an Audience and Event Type

Successful events consider the needs of the community. For example, if your community is largely bilingual, prepare bilingual materials and have bilingual speakers. If your community has a large senior citizen population, avoid holding your event at night and hold your event at a venue that is handicap accessible. To learn more about a community's needs, contact your local health department, Poison Center, or city council.

#### Children

Since the leading causes of poison exposures involve cosmetics, cleaning products, and medicines in children under the age of 6, an effective event might target those who provide care for children or provide parents and caretakers with information on health care. Targeted audiences could include:

- School-aged children
- Parents
- Teenagers/babysitters
- Grandparents/older adults
- Child care providers
- Pediatricians and emergency service personnel

#### Preteens/Teens

Use of inhalants—household products that are sniffed to get high—among youth in this country is a concern. The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition and the Partnership for a Drug Free America reports inhalant use increases of 18 percent among 8th graders and 44 percent among 6th graders. An effective event might focus on the harm and dangers involved with using inhalants and other drugs.

#### Adults

More than 70 percent of all poison deaths related to prescription pain killer abuses occur in adults ages 20 to 59. An effective event might consider the concerns and schedules of adults. Create an event that is convenient for adults to attend and that addresses relevant poison prevention issues. For example, you could partner with local businesses and organizations to provide resources on poison prevention to their employees.

#### Older Adults

Older adults are more likely than others to die from poisonings due to therapeutic error. While these adults account for 5 percent of possible poisonings, they account for 16 percent of deaths. An effective event might consider the concerns and physical limitations of this population. For example, you could review medication safety, such as making a list of all medications taken to share with physicians, ensure medications are kept locked up away from children, not share medications, and take as directed.

### Ideas for Events and Activities

#### • Local National Poison Prevention Week 2009 Poster Contest

Invite local kids to create a poster that can be used to educate the public about poisoning. If budget allows, as part of the contest, host a reception or awards program to recognize participants and present prizes. Don't forget to invite the media for coverage of the event. If budgeting is a concern, seek sponsors or donations from local businesses, especially those that you contract with for services.

There are two themes for the *National Poison Prevention Week* poster contest: *Poisonings Span a Lifetime* and *Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons*. For more suggestions and guidelines visit <http://www.poisonprevention.org/poster.htm>.



- **Host a Poison First Aid Class**

Work with your local [American Red Cross](#) chapter and Poison Center to coordinate a first aid class focused on poisoning for your community and workplace.

- **Partner with Your Local Poison Center to Coordinate a Tour**

Possibilities include a picnic outside of the facility followed by tours. Another idea is to collaborate with local schools to offer a tour of your local poison control center as a field trip.

- **Conduct a Community Health Fair**

Invite your Poison Center, local health professionals, firefighters, police officers, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop leaders, 4H Club leaders, and others to set up booths about an area of their expertise in poison prevention.

- **With Guidance from your Poison Center Create a Look-Alike Display**

Create a look-alike display that shows a variety of potentially poisonous items that look almost identical to non-poisonous items. Examples can be found at the [The Missouri Regional Poison Center](#).

- **Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program or Event**

Unwanted and outdated pharmaceuticals pose serious safety and environmental threats ranging from child poisonings and illegal use to contamination of our streams and drinking water. Work with your Poison Center and local law enforcement to coordinate a free and safe disposal of unwanted, unneeded, and expired medications. Controlled substances require special handling and law enforcement must be involved.

